

CHRIST CHURCH SMALL GROUPS

Lectionary Readings for the Weekend of May 19, 2024 – The Day of Pentecost, Year B



Instruction: Small Groups are encouraged to read each text and use the discussion questions for further conversation and growth.

The Collect

Almighty God, on this day you opened the way of eternal life to every race and nation by the promised gift of your Holy Spirit: Shed abroad this gift throughout the world by the preaching of the Gospel, that it may reach to the ends of the earth; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

The First Reading | Acts 2:1-21

When the day of Pentecost had come, the disciples were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. Amazed and astonished, they asked, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power.” All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” But others sneered and said, “They are filled with new wine.” But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, “Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o’clock in the morning. No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: ‘In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist. The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord’s great and glorious day. Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.’”

The Psalm | Psalm 104:25-35, 37

²⁵ O Lord, how manifold are your works! in wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.

²⁶ Yonder is the great and wide sea with its living things too many to number, creatures both small and great.

²⁷ There move the ships, and there is that Leviathan, which you have made for the sport of it.

²⁸ All of them look to you to give them their food in due season.

²⁹ You give it to them; they gather it; you open your hand, and they are filled with good things.

³⁰ You hide your face, and they are terrified; you take away their breath, and they die and return to their dust.

³¹ You send forth your Spirit, and they are created; and so you renew the face of the earth.

³² May the glory of the Lord endure for ever; may the Lord rejoice in all his works.

³³ He looks at the earth and it trembles; he touches the mountains and they smoke.

³⁴ I will sing to the Lord as long as I live; I will praise my God while I have my being.

³⁵ May these words of mine please him; I will rejoice in the Lord.

³⁷ Bless the Lord, O my soul. Hallelujah!

The Second Reading | Romans 8:22-27

We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

The Gospel | John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15

Jesus said to his disciples, “When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf. You also are to testify because you have been with me from the beginning. I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you. But now I am going to him who sent me; yet none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your hearts. Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will prove the world wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: about sin, because they do not believe in me; about righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will see me no longer; about judgment, because the ruler of this world has been condemned. I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.”

Discuss:

1. **The Collect:** What a mission-centered prayer! On this day that we celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit, we recognize the Holy Spirit as a pathway to eternal life, open to every race and nation, spread by our preaching. Is this sharing and spreading of the Spirit something we all take part in? How? What’s one way you can “preach the gospel” this week?
2. **The First Reading:** This story is Luke’s telling of God’s gifting of the Holy Spirit to the disciples. It is awe-inspiring, chaotic, and intimate all at once. What exactly is God doing? The disciples will find out in due time. God’s Spirit will spread far and wide through them to “reach into our lives and make each life a site of speaking glory” (Willie Jennings, *Acts*). The Holy Spirit will take the disciples far and wide. Likewise, we can look at our lives and inquire: where is the Holy Spirit taking us and into whose lives? Where are you (or where is Christ Church) called to be? With what people and communities?
3. **The Second Reading:** What does it feel like to pray? Is it intimate? Do you feel God’s presence? Paul says that there can be times of prayer when we do not know what to say. In these moments, the groaning of the Holy Spirit takes over and intercedes for us. Have you ever had that experience—where you were too distraught or upset to pray or speak to God, yet the Holy Spirit carried you through? What is it like to pray without words but with the groaning of our heart?
4. **The Gospel:** We are once again with Jesus in his “farewell discourse,” his final teachings to his disciples on the night he was betrayed. Jesus tells his followers, “It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you, but if I go, I will send him to you.” How could Jesus’ departure be to their (and our) advantage? Can you imagine the disciples hearing this? What do you think was their reaction? How would you feel if Jesus told you he must leave you but leave you with a “comforter, an advocate” (the Holy Spirit)? How is the Holy Spirit continuing Jesus’ work in you?